

Zechariah 17 – Replacing God With Nothingness

Zechariah - 10:2
Dr. Leon L. Sanders

Verse Seemingly Out of Place

- God had announced future blessings on His people
 - They are the jewels in His crown
 - He will protect them in that Day (at His coming)
- God will declare Israel's future calling
 - Two Kingdoms united as one nation of strength
- God speaks a present warning to Judah of failure

Emptiness Apart From God

- Teraphim *speaking* emptiness {Nonsense} (11:44-14:20)
- Diviners - False Prophets
 - Choose false dreams, rejecting God's covenants
 - Tell the people empty dreams
 - Give false direction to people seeking guidance
- Therefore, people lack direction - Have no shepherd

Understand the Imagery

- Nonsense (פִּיִּץ) [Panting] – Pervasive cultural religious-ethical rejection of God; i.e., Anti-God ➔ Emptiness
- Teraphim – Family idols used for protection, guidance
- Idols do not speak; the worshiper gains guidance by putting his meaning on them (Religiosity) (Ge 31:30-35)
- Thus, at the family level Jewish culture remained captive to living apart from God despite it's exile and return (Is 29:18)

Divination – Anti-Guidance (2Ch. 26:16-20)

- Obtaining guidance apart from God through special knowledge & rituals (מִדְּבָרִים) [Balaam] [Various methods]
 - They see lies (רָקִישׁ), spoke from their spirits, not God's
 - They speak empty (אִישׁוֹ) dreams [Devoid of God]
 - They give empty (לִבְהִלָּה) consolation (מִדְּבָרִים) [Deep sigh signifying resignation, repentance, or despair]
- Gave people Anti-God guidance

Narrow or Wide Path (Mt. 7:13-14)

God Law of Excluded Middle **Anti-God**

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guidance by His Word and His Tabernacle ○ Guidance by prophets of God who warned of sin ○ Guidance is submission to God only {No other god} | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guidance by Teraphim and other idolatries ○ Guidance by diviners and false prophets ○ Believers follow anti-God {Lucifer} into emptiness |
|---|--|

Twin Pillars of Anti-Godism

Method to be as gods

Existentialism

Definition?

? What is a simple definition of existentialism?

A Existentialism's a movement which posits that individuals create the meaning & essence of their lives.

Ge 4:1-8

Result of being as gods

NIHILISTS' CORNER

nihilism n. 1a) the denial of the existence of any basis for knowledge or truth
 b) the general rejection of customary beliefs in morality, religion, etc. 2. the belief that there is no meaning or purpose in existence.
 --Webster New World Dictionary

Ge 4:13-17

Anti-Godism's Rewards

Existentialism

○ Lucifer offered {Lied} Woman opportunity to define her existence (Ge 3:5-6)

○ Man continually defines himself apart from God - Philosophies & Religions (Ge 6:5; Je 17:9)

Shades of Gray Morality

Nihilism

○ Result of anti-Godism was fear, guilt, emptiness AEB their actions (Ge 3:7-8)

○ Man continually reaps to himself the results of anti-Godism - Guilt, fear, & emptiness (Ro 1:18-32; Jo 4:1-40)

Only Darkness of Sin

Father of Modern Nihilism

- Nietzsche defined, not invent, nihilism {Emptiness}
 - Nihilism comes from the Latin nihil (nothing), that which does not exist (Vanity in English Bibles usu.)
 - Greek Skeptics (4th, 3rd centuries BC onward) questioned traditional truths (existentialism led to nihilism)
 - "Popularized...in Ivan Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons* (1862)...'nihilism'...describe(d)...crude scientism...a creed of total negation" (Critical Theory - Today's term) (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/nihilism/>)

Bible Consistently Warns of Nihilism

- Manner of creation showed emptiness changed by the direct intervention of God, Christ & Spirit (Ge 1:1-5)
 - Darkness, empty and emptiness – Chaos (Satan's sin)
 - God begot the Light (Son) against the darkness (Jo 1:1-5, 9-13)
 - Son established order then created life in its own order
 - Son as the *only* Light offers Life to Man
 - Sin rejects Light & Life – Loves Emptiness of Darkness (Jo 3:17-21)
- Evolution posits life out of disorder (Chaos) - Very opposite of God's Teaching

Job: Discussed Nihilism – Life

- Job – First book written discusses nihilism from four views including Job's Religiosity (Hints of truth)
 - Emptiness begets emptiness (κῆψ) (Eliphaz) (Jo 15:10)
 - God does not answer the *empty* (κῆψ) cry of those who live apart from God who seek *empty* relief (Elihu) (Jo 35:6-13)
- Nihilism rejects empiricism; God displays Himself via empiricism, only *reality* physical man can measure (Jo 38-41, Ps 79:1-6)

Eliphaz (My God is Gold) has truth but missed coming to God - Elihu (He is g God) proves man can know God

Solomon Despaired in Nihilism

- Solomon received worldly wisdom to rule Israel; he wasted his life seeking truth apart from God (1K 3:1-15)
 - Solomon despaired: nothing was original (Ec 1:9-11)
 - Worldly wisdom is nihilism – Empty of God (Ec 1:12-18)
 - Solomon sought truth apart from God by experiences only to despair: death equalizes all worldly works (Ec 2)
 - Solomon wasted his life to understand God's truth at his end – fear God Who will judge all men (Ec 12:11-14)

Depression is the realization that one's life is empty; devoid of God or warring against God

Nihilism Brings Violence

- Sin, life apart from God, can only reproduce its own self: dark, empty, emptiness that hates Light (Is. 59)
- Regardless of the methodology {Idolatry, Religiosity, Philosophy & Pseudosciences} man defining his existence produces only violence, lies, & death (Is. 3:30-38)
- Man rejecting God is anti-God: ultimately worship of Lucifer, walking in his sin (Rejection of God as God) (1Co. 10:19)

Why is God Angry?

- God taught His people truth by His Word & miracles
 - His people persisted in rejecting Him for death (Is. 32:15-21)
 - His people resisted His correction by prophets, whom they killed, and exile (Is. 2:29-32)
 - *False Jews* consumed by the sinners they join with (Is. 4:30-5:3, Ro. 1:32, Re. 17:18)
 - *True Jews*, He loves, are chastened by Him to turn them from the darkness of nihilism back to life in Him (Is. 12:5-8)

God's People Have No Shepherd

- *False Jews* chose to find guidance apart from God via:
 - Teraphim – Family teaches children to reject God
 - Diviners – People advancing themselves at the expense of those who reject or are ignorant of God's Word
- As Old Testament closes *False Jews* thought it evil to serve God but God wrote *True Jews* in His Book of Remembrance {Life} for kingdom resurrection (Is. 3:15-18, Re. 20:11-15)

Jews Chose Nihilism Over Life

- Those who should have been Judah's true shepherds defined their own existence in darkness of nihilism
 - People willing to follow anyone for fleshly gains (Lk 11:14)
 - Leaders killed their prophet, John, the Baptist (Mt 24:1-12)
 - Christ came to be the Shepherd but killed by False Jews wanting Darkness (Nihilism) over Light (Lk 10:1-15)
 - Led to Diaspora that continues today (A.D. 70 & 133)

We Killed God – Basis of Morality

- Nietzsche's famous line was written to atheists who did not know God was dead – Had not reordered society
 - Nietzsche despised religion, empty Christendom
 - Bible provided Western man with basis for morality
 - Rational man sought to redefine morality empirically
 - He saw this as a long difficult process (Spirit controlled)
 - He lapsed into his darkness as has Western culture

The very modality for knowing of God, empiricism (Job), used by rational man to reject God (Ro 1:18-21)

German Textual Criticism

- During latter part of 19th into 20th centuries German textual criticism tried to destroy veracity of the Bible
 - Christendom religions rejected the Gospel for nihilistic philosophies and pseudosciences; evangelicals followed
 - Postmodernism grew out of Existentialism and Nihilism rejecting biblical morality: basis for Western culture
 - Cultural confusion, emptiness and violence ensued; 20th century most violent in history, 21st following same path

Religious liberalism was opposed by learned Fundamentalism; during Depression the term fundamentalism became co-opted by populist fundamental evangelical movements founded on legalism rather than scholarship

Christendom's False Teachers

- The 19th and 20th centuries in America witnessed a proliferation of false teachers that extended globally in the 21st century (2Pe 2; Jude 11-13)
 - Their nihilistic teaching AEB confusion, emptiness and the excesses they acquire for themselves
 - They do in the daylight that which used to be hidden by darkness following the licentious culture and reducing themselves to animalistic hedonism (Evolution)

Are Christians Any Better?

- Do we not also follow false divinations and household traditions just as the ancient Jews?
 - God *spoke* to my heart? (What does that even mean?)
 - God *open* a door or *shut* a door (Can not Satan?)
 - God *punished* (fill-in the blank) for sin (Can we know?)
- This shallow religiosity borders on blasphemy since we do not have direct knowledge of spiritual forces at work

Times Never Be A Changing

- Times are not worse today than any other time of man
 - This is man's sinful condition since Original Sin
 - Bible clearly shows there is only Life or Nihilism
 - Western culture had *brief* respite from nihilistic annihilation: Reformation (Co-opted by nation-states)
- We are saved in spite of our sinfulness due to His Faithfulness and His Righteousness (Ro 8:35,39)
- Christian who sins finds nihilism, AEB guilt, rejecting fruits of the Spirit: peace, love, joy, patience, etc. (Ga 5:19,25)